



9 October 2017

## Borsak refers Gundagai Hospital Sale to ICAC

Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party MLC Robert Borsak referred the sale of the Old Gundagai Hospital by Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD) to the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) on Sunday.

Mr Borsak had been made aware of the incident by concerned locals at the weekend who were overlooked in the sale process in favour of an alleged Sydney-based buyer, despite making a higher offer. That buyer paid quarter of the market price and then on-sold it for a profit of half a million dollars just 12-months later.

"I have little confidence in the administration of Murrumbidgee Local Health District, and on face value this whole process stinks," Mr Borsak said.

"If corruption isn't involved here, then it's incompetence – and that's just as bad.

"My understanding is that after there were no bidders for auction of the O'Hagan Street site in 2014, and the site was then advertised for \$400,000.

"A group of Gundagai locals, including former Gundagai Mayor Abb McAlister and Jim Saunderson, made offers to purchase the site to construct a community-funded aged care facility. They couldn't secure the \$400,000 funding and their offers below the advertised price but were refused by MLHD.

"Then, in early 2015 an alleged Sydney-based buyer purchased the 12,850 square metre site for \$110,000.

"One year later, this Sydney-based buyer then sold the Old Gundagai Hospital to Dr Dr Nirmal Taluja for \$650,000.

"This generated a profit of half a million dollars for the person who bought it from the NSW Government.

"Mr McAlister, Mr Saunderson, and Dr Taluja appear to have been victims of circumstance and haven't done anything wrong.

"I don't know what's going on at MLHD but I hope the ICAC will get to the bottom of this matter.

"As somebody who's had business experience in selling large commercial properties of higher value than this hospital, I cannot fathom why MLHD would not have opted for the higher offer by Gundagai residents, rather than this apparent Sydney bidder."

Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party Cootamundra by-election candidate Matthew Stadtmiller welcomed the referral for an independent investigation.

"I'm glad that Robert Borsak has made this referral," Mr Stadtmiller said.

"Residents across Gundagai have been furious about this situation for some time now, and that's why I introduced him to some of these concerned residents.

"I don't understand why former Nationals MP Katrina Hodgkinson didn't push for an ICAC referral, or an independent inquiry, sooner."

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